



December 18, 2002

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Livestock and Seed Programs  
Agriculture Marketing Service  
Stop 0249 Room 2092-S  
Washington DC 20250-0249

SUBJECT: School Lunch Irradiation Proposal

Dear USDA Folks:

YES, I am in favor of serving irradiated food to our schoolchildren. I cannot understand why you would not. The process has been approved as safe by your own agency as well as many others. If we don't provide irradiated food where possible we are unnecessarily exposing our children to foodborne disease. Now that it is available I won't allow unirradiated ground beef into my home. If I did now buy unirradiated beef, and a member of my family became ill from a foodborne pathogen, I would be the guilty culprit. You should feel the same way. It's a matter of public health. As for the "Anti-Everything" people who will undoubtedly flood you with e-mails opposing the process: Just suppose they were writing to you protesting the pasteurization of milk. Would you then delete pasteurized milk from the school lunch program? Just remember, their "votes" do not truly represent the public at large. They were not elected by the people. However, Congress was, and they passed a law to prevent you from preventing the use of irradiation on food served in the school lunch program.

A simple but undisputed fact is that many children in the past have become seriously ill from eating food served via the school lunch program. If that food had been irradiated they would not have become sick. Every day that you delay in employing irradiation, more of our kids will sicken, and some will die.

I don't fully understand why you have asked for these comments. If you continue to prevent the use of irradiation, the following will result:

1. You will be breaking the law by defying an act of Congress (signed by the President).



2. If any member of somebody's family becomes ill as a result of consuming a product that could have been irradiated but wasn't because you prevented it, lawsuits, news media and Congressional hearings will rain down upon you. The usual scapegoats will be required.

3. Far more important: More children will become ill. Some will recover without serious effect. Some will suffer for the rest of their lives. Some will die.

I sincerely hope that doesn't happen.

Martin H. Stein

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin H. Stein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Martin" and last name "Stein" being more prominent than the middle initial "H".

President, CEO